

The Promise of Salvation

Genesis 3:14-24

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What is the law of first mention?

The law of first mention is useful for studying Scripture.

The law of first mention says that, to better understand a particular word or doctrine, we should study the first place in Scripture that word or doctrine is revealed.

- The reasoning is that the Bible's first mention of a concept is the simplest and clearest presentation; doctrines are developed on that foundation.

What does the law of first mention have to say about the importance of the book of Genesis?

Genesis, the book of beginnings, naturally contains many "first mentions," including the foundations of these doctrines and concepts: divine omnipotence, creation, paradise, marriage, family, sin, sacrifice, atonement, angels, prayer, judgment, covenant, government, death, burial, etc.

- When asked about marriage, Jesus pointed to two "first mention" passages: *"Haven't you read . . . that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?"* (Matt 19:4-5; cf. Gen 1:27; 2:24).

What caution is there about the law of first mention?

When following the law of first mention, we must be careful to also follow the other rules of hermeneutics. We cannot ignore context, for example.

- The first mention of a serpent in Genesis 3 is associated with Satan but this doesn't mean every mention of a serpent should be interpreted as satanic (the serpent on the pole in Numbers 21:9 is a type of Christ, according to John 3:14).
- One of the weaknesses of the law of first mention is in knowing what comes "first." Are we to look at the Scriptures strictly chronologically or according to the order of the books as we have them now?

What is the importance of the first two major prophecies of Scripture?

In subsequent prophecies both the judgment on sin and the promise of salvation can be traced throughout Scripture.

What does the fulfillment of these first prophecies tell us about how prophecy should be interpreted?

Since these were fulfilled literally, we should expect to interpret prophecy literally.

- When Adam and Eve sinned they literally died spiritually and later physically.
- The prophecies of cursing on the serpent and Satan, the prophecies of Eve's suffering pain in childbirth and being subject to her husband, and the prophecies to Adam of raising food with great toil have all been subject to literal fulfillment (vv. 14-19).

Genesis 3:14-24

¹⁴ *So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.*

¹⁵ *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*

¹⁶ *To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."*

¹⁷ *Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. ¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."*

²⁰ *And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.*

²¹ *Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.*

²² *Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— ²³ therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.*

How was the first prophecy of death from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil fulfilled?

This first prophecy was fulfilled by the immediate spiritual death of Adam and Eve and their ultimate physical death.

What were the consequences of Adam & Eve's sin?

God prophesied that Eve would give birth to children in pain and that her husband would rule over her.

- To Adam, God predicted that the ground would be cursed and he would have difficulty raising the food necessary for continued existence.

v14 – What did God have to say to Satan for his role in tempting Eve?

When God spoke to Adam and to Eve, He questioned each of them. God didn't ask Satan any questions because there was nothing to teach him.

What was God's judgment on Satan?

You are cursed more than all cattle: The first part of the curse is directed at the animal that Satan used to bring the temptation.

- God commanded the serpent to slither on the ground instead of walking on legs like any other animal.

On your belly you shall go: Whatever noble bearing the creature known as the serpent had before the fall and the curse, that nobility was gone. Now the creature Satan used to tempt Eve would be a low, groveling creature.

What does it tell us the serpent would eat dust all the days of its life?

This was true of the serpent as an animal, but it is also true of Satan. To eat dust has the idea of total defeat (Isaiah 65:25, Micah 7:17). God's judgment on Satan is for him to always know defeat. He will always reach for victory but always fall short of it.

- Satan was, in his own thinking, majestic and triumphant over Jesus on the cross, but he failed. In attacking Jesus, Satan made his own doom certain.

How do you think Adam & Eve thought about this once-beautiful creature transformed to a snake?

It would have been terrifying... they must have thought, "It's our turn next!"

- *I will put enmity between you and the woman:* In addition, there is a natural aversion between mankind and serpents, especially on the part of women.

Why would God punish the poor serpent, it was Satan who possessed him who was really culpable?

The serpent must have been open to being possessed by Satan. We see this in humans being possessed when they reject God and show interest in the occult.

- Scripture repeatedly relates idol worship to the actual worship of demons (Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:37; 1 Corinthians 10:20), so it should not be surprising that involvement with idolatry could lead to demon possession.

v15 – What was God's direct punishment to Satan?

Enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed: God placed a natural animosity between Satan and mankind.

- Enmity has the idea of ill will, hatred, and a mutual antagonism.
- Satan's hatred of Eve was nothing new; it was already present — but now man will, generally speaking, have antagonism towards Satan.

How are humans naturally repulsed by Satan?

If we are born naturally rebellious against God, we are also born cautious and afraid of Satan.

- One must be hardened to willingly and knowingly serve Satan.
- Instinctively, we don't serve God or Satan; we serve ourselves (which is fine with Satan).

What would be the doom of Satan?

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel: God prophesies that the real battle is between Satan and the Seed of the Woman and that Satan would lose.

- God said Satan would wound the Messiah (*you shall bruise His heel*), but the Messiah would crush Satan with a mortal wound (*He shall bruise your head*).

It was as if God could not wait to announce His plan of salvation, to bring deliverance through the one known as the Seed of the woman.

How would Satan wound the Messiah?

The heel is the part within the serpent's reach. Jesus, in taking on humanity, brought Himself near to Satan's domain so Satan could strike Him which he did in arranging for Jesus to go to the cross.

What does the Seed of the Woman tell us?

This prophecy also gives the first hint of the virgin birth, declaring the Messiah — the Deliverer — would be the Seed of the Woman, but not of the man.

Why is Genesis 3:15 called the proto-evangelium?

This is the first gospel. This is the first mention of God's provision for restoring our relationship with Him... the good news in the coming of the Messiah.

Was God's plan of salvation the back-up to mankind's fall into sin?

God's plan wasn't defeated when Adam and Eve sinned because God's plan was to bring forth something greater than man in the innocence of Eden.

- God wanted more than just innocent man; His plan had always been to bring forth redeemed man.
- Redeemed man is greater than innocent man and would only be possible because man had something to be redeemed from.

v16 – What was God's judgment on women?

I will greatly multiply your sorrow: God first cursed the woman with multiplied sorrow. Men and women have each known sorrow throughout history, yet the unique sorrow of women is well known.

What has been the sorrow of women throughout history?

It is difficult for women in Christian lands to realize the miseries of the multitudes of sisters in pagan lands, where the lot of women is little above that of cattle.

- Under Jesus, some of the effects of the curse are relieved, and it has been the Christianizing of society that brought rights and dignity to women.

What would be the pain in bringing forth children?

Women would experience pain in regard to their children in general, not just in the act of giving birth.

- God ordained that the pain with which women bring children into this world be an example of the pain they experience more generally in life.
- It has been observed that women bring forth children with more pain than just about any other creature.

What does it mean, "your desire shall be for your husband"?

Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you: The idea is to contrast the woman's desire and the husband's rule over her.

- This speaks of an inherent challenge in embracing the husband's role as leader of the home and family.
- Eve would have to fight a desire to master her husband, a desire that works against God's ordained order for the home.

The principle of Adam's headship as a husband was established before the fall (see Genesis 2:18 and 2:22).

- Now the curse on Eve makes it much harder for her to submit and flow with God's institution of male headship in the home.

What impact does this tension over headship of the family have on husbands?

Man no longer rules easily; he must fight from his headship; and sometimes he just gives up.

- Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband.
- So, the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny and domination.

v17-19 – What was God's assessment of Adam's sin?

Because you have heeded the voice of your wife: It wasn't just as if Adam took Eve's advice. He chose to be with Eve instead of obeying God.

- There is a sense in which idolatry of Eve was an aspect of Adam's disobedience against God.

What does it mean the ground was cursed?

Because of Adam's sin, there is a curse upon all creation. Before the curse on man, the ground only produced good.

- After the curse, it still produced good, but thorns and thistles will come faster and easier than good fruit.

How did the thorns and thistles impact Adam's work?

In toil you shall eat of it: Adam worked before the curse, but it was all joy. Now work has a cursed element to it, with pain and weariness a part of work.

How do we see thorns and thistles in our work today?

It is a fallen world so things break and require maintenance. We have quality problems causing work to be tedious to minimize them.

- Second Law of Thermodynamics – Entropy (randomness) increases... Example: Iron naturally combines with oxygen creating rust
- Order naturally yields to disorder requiring human intervention to maintain the order.

How does the presence of the curse actually reveal that the universe had to have a created beginning?

We still see the created order in the universe despite the Second Law of Thermodynamics which if there really were billions of years if it being in place, all the stars would cool down and fly apart.

What does it mean, "dust you are, and to dust you shall return"?

The final curse upon man promised there would be an end of his toil and labor on the earth — but it was an end of death, not an end of deliverance.

How was the curse of death resulting from Adam's sin extended to the entire human race?

Because of Adam:

- Sin entered the world (Romans 5:12).
- Death came to all mankind (Rom 5:15, 1 Cor 15:22).
- Death reigned over man and creation (Romans 5:17)
- All men were condemned (Romans 5:18).
- All men were made sinners (Romans 5:19).

How did Jesus become the curse for us?

Galatians 3:13 – *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us*

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.

- Sin brought pain to childbirth, and no one knew more pain than Jesus did when He, through His suffering, brought many sons to glory (Heb 2:10).
- Sin brought conflict, and Jesus endured great conflict to bring our salvation (Hebrews 12:3).
- Thorns came with sin and the fall, and Jesus endured a crown of thorns to bring our salvation (John 19:2).
- Sin brought sweat, and Jesus sweat, as it were, great drops of blood to win our salvation (Luke 22:44).
- Sin brought sorrow, and Jesus became a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, to save us (Is 53:3).
- Sin brought death, and Jesus tasted death for everyone that we might be saved (Hebrews 2:9).

v20 – What is the significance of Eve getting her name?

Up to Genesis 3:20, the woman has never been called Eve.

- *Because she was the mother of all living:* Adam named her Eve, even though she was not a mother at all at the time. She was not even pregnant yet.
- Adam named her in faith, trusting God would bring forth a deliverer from the woman because God said He would defeat Satan through the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15).

v21 – What was the significance of God clothing Adam and Eve in the skins of animals?

God wanted Adam and Eve clothed, not naked. If nudity represented a higher, freer life, then God would have let Adam and Eve remain naked — but He clothed them.

- In order for Adam and Eve to be clothed, a sacrifice had to be made. An animal had to die. *Without shedding of blood there is no remission* (Heb 9:22).

This first death of an animal pointed to Christ who would shed His blood to cover our sins.

What is the difference between the covering of fig leaves and animal skins?

There are only two religions; there is the religion of fig leaves and there is the religion of God's perfect provision through Jesus.

- Covering ourselves with our good works is like Adam and Eve trying to cover themselves with fig leaves.
- Adam and Eve were clothed with a garment that was purchased with the life of another.

We are clothed with a garment of righteousness that was purchased with the life of another, Jesus Christ.

Will we see Adam and Eve in heaven?

Yes... It was God who clothed them. This, together with the expression of faith in God's promise shown in the naming of Eve, indicates that Adam and Eve were rescued from their sinful condition.

- Adam had faith in God's promise of a Savior, and God provided a covering for them through a sacrifice.
- Eve recognized God's provision in her firstborn as the potential Messiah in saying, *"I have gotten a man from the Lord"* (Genesis 4:1).

The only question is... will they have belly buttons?

v22-24 – How had man become like God?

Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil: This might be a note of sarcasm by God, regarding Satan's empty promise to become like gods.

- Or, perhaps the idea focuses on man's greater knowledge (though in a bad sense) now that he has the experiential knowledge of evil.

What was the danger in fallen man remaining in the Garden of Eden?

And take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: In mercy, God protected Adam and Eve from the horrible fate of having to live forever as sinners by preventing them from eating from the tree of life.

How might Adam and Eve have reacted to being banished from the Garden of Eden?

Perhaps they felt if they left the garden, they might never see God again because it was the only place where they met Him.

What does it tell us that Cherubim guarded entrance to the Garden of Eden?

Cherubim are always associated with the presence and glory of God (Ezekiel 10, Isaiah 6, Revelation 4).

- When cherubim are represented on earth (such as in the tabernacle, Exodus 25:10-22), they mark a meeting place with God.
- Though Adam and Eve and their descendants were prevented from eating the fruit of the tree of life, they could still come there to meet God. This was their “holy of holies.”

What was the point of the flaming sword?

Any angel of the lowest rank could have dealt with Adam. The flaming sword was pointed against Satan to keep him from destroying the way of access to the altar, which God had set up.

What became of the Garden of Eden?

This is the last historical mention of the garden of Eden in the Bible. We can speculate that God did not destroy it, but left it to the effects of the curse and suppose that it generally deteriorated from its original condition, blending into the surrounding geography.

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- God’s plan of redemption was always Plan A!
- The prophecies of consequences from the fall are fulfilled exactly, so will the prophecy of redemption!
- The shedding of blood was necessary for the forgiveness of sin... from the beginning!